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Book Reviews.

The Book of Job. By ROBERT A. WATSON, D.D., in the Series of The Expositor's Bible, edited by the REV. W. ROBERTSON NICOLL. New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son. Pp. 416. Price \$2.

There has been quite a difference in the relative value of the volumes of this series. Some have been very good; some, it is necessary to say, very bad. The present volume cannot be said to belong to either of these classes, since it occupies a middle ground.

The first chapter, upon "The Author and his Work" contains many interesting comparisons. The writer sees in the early Akkadian Psalms precursors of Job. With all the writers of modern times, he gives up the traditional Mosaic or pre-Mosaic age, and while he recognizes the picture as one mainly of patriarchal life, the surroundings of the writer are found to furnish the elements of the picture. "No quiet patriarchal life in a region sparsely peopled, where the year went slow and placid, could have supplied these elements. The writer has seen the ways of the great city in which the tide of prosperity flows over the crushed and dying. He has seen, and indeed we are almost sure has suffered in some national disaster like those to which he refers,—a Hebrew not of the age after the return from exile, for the style of his writing, partly through the use of the Arabic and Aramaic form has more of rude vigor and spontaneity than finds so late a date. He appears to have felt all the sorrows of his people when the conquering armies of Assyria or of Babylon overran their land. The elaborate scheme of the book indicates that it could not have been produced until literature had become an art. A comparison with Proverbs, Isaiah and Ecclesiastes also assists in determining the date. The writer lived at a time when the creed of Hebraism had ceased to guide thought and lead the soul to strength." He, himself, supposed to be an exile of the northern kingdom, escaping with his life from the sword of the Assyrian and taking his way into the Arabian wilderness, finds the friendship of some chief and a safe retreat among his people. "The desert has become familiar to him, the sandy wastes, the vivid oases, the fierce storm and affluent sunshine, the villages, the patriarchal customs, of olden times. He has traveled through Idumæa and seen the desert tombs, and to Midian and its lonely peaks. He has heard the roll of the great sea on the sands of the Shephelah, and seen the vast tide of the Nile flowing through the verdure of the Delta, and past the pyramids of Memphis. He has wandered through the cities of Egypt and viewed their teeming life, turning to the use of imagination and religion all he beheld with a relish for his own language, yet

enriching it by the words and ideas of all other lands. He has practiced himself in the writer's art, and at length in some hour of burning memory and experience he has caught the history of one who, yonder in the valley of an eastern wilderness, knew the shocks of time and pain, though his heart was right with God; and in the height of his spirit the poet-exile makes the story of that life into a drama of the trial of human faith, his own endurance and vindication and hope."

In spite of this plausible presentation the arguments presented against the theory advocated by Davidson, Cheyne and others, namely, that the book belongs to the exilic period, are not satisfactory. One can easily imagine that the chapters of this book, if ever preached as sermons, would produce a strong effect. The writer's power of description is excellent, his discrimination is generally to be commended. There is an element of the mystical in the interpretations presented, and one must confess a feeling of disappointment in the treatment which is accorded many of the most difficult passages. The Elihu passages are treated as a later interpolation in a poem which has come down from a previous age. The presentation of this theory is very satisfactory. As a contribution to our knowledge of the Book of Job, the book contains nothing; as, on the other hand, a presentation in popular form of many of the latest results of scholarly investigation, it may well be commended.

W. R. H.

The Bible Verified. By REV. ANDREW W. ARCHIBALD, with an introductory note by PROFESSOR RANSOM B. WELCH. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication. Pp. 1-252. Price, 75 cents.

The writer has in these chapters discussed, without any claim to originality, some of the present living questions. His position, as stated in the preface, is strongly conservative. Among the subjects discussed are, "What constitutes the Bible," "The Bible in manuscript," "The inspiration of the Bible," "The Bible and the miraculous," "Formidable objections to the Bible," "Incidental confirmations of the Bible," "The Bible and science," "The elevating influence of the Bible," "The Bible and the golden city of Babylon," "The Bible and the destruction of Jerusalem," "The Bible and the peculiar Jews," "The Bible and the monuments." The present effort is made for those who have not been able to give these questions much thought, and must therefore be criticised from this point of view. In all such efforts the principle of accommodation must rule. It is manifestly impossible for a writer, however much he may know under such circumstances, to present all the facts necessary to secure a basis for an intelligent opinion. Still further, it is necessary in such work to emphasize the constructive side. Difficulties may not be introduced. Our writer shows his method very clearly in treating of the Bible and the monuments, when he says, "For our present purpose of simply opening up this boundless field of investigation it is sufficient to note the positive confirmations being given by the very stones to the holy oracles." The same